

RETAIL PRICES - DECEMBER QUARTER, 1952.

All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases^a, December Quarter, 1952.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from December Quarter, 1951.	Increase from September Quarter, 1952.
		%	%	%
Brisbane ..	2,089	142.1	8.0	-0.2
Toowoomba ..	2,110	147.9	8.5	0.1
Rockhampton ..	2,128	147.2	9.1	0.8
Townsville ..	2,194	140.6	9.4	0.9
Bundaberg ..	2,086	148.0	9.2	0.4
Warwick ..	2,102	155.7	9.6	0.4

^a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

After four quarters with successively smaller increases, the "C" Series price index numbers for Queensland reached a fairly steady level in the December quarter of 1952. The weighted average index number for the "five towns" of Queensland was practically unchanged at 2,100, compared with 2,101 for the preceding quarter. In Brisbane the index number recorded a slight fall of 0.2 per cent., compared with a rise of 1.5 per cent. in the September quarter, but in all the other cities it rose slightly. The only significant rises were 0.9 and 0.8 per cent. respectively in Townsville and Rockhampton.

Food and grocery prices fell in each of the six cities for which data are available, while clothing and footwear and miscellaneous items rose, and rent was unchanged or slightly up, in all six cities. The small decrease in the combined "C" Series index for Brisbane was entirely due to the fall in the food and groceries section. In the other cities, except Toowoomba, the decrease in food and groceries prices was much less than in Brisbane, and the rises in the other sections of the index caused increases in their combined indexes. In Toowoomba, where food and grocery prices decreased by almost as much as in Brisbane, the combined "C" Series index was practically unchanged, its increase being only 0.1 per cent. In the other four cities the decreases in food and grocery prices were smaller, and the combined index rose, particularly in Townsville (0.9 per cent. increase) and Rockhampton (0.8 per cent. increase) in which cities there were larger rises in the miscellaneous items section.

The latest quarter's movement in the Brisbane "C" Series index number made the total increase since the previous December quarter 8.0 per cent. This was the smallest increase for a corresponding twelve-months period since 1949, when it was 7.9 per cent. 1950 and 1951 increases were 11.0 and 25.1 per cent. respectively.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases^a, December Quarter, 1952.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1952.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	171.1	-1.9	272.5	1.3	99.5	0.7
Toowoomba ..	190.0	-1.7	272.3	2.2	98.8	0.4
Rockhampton ..	166.3	-1.1	270.2	1.9	106.9	1.8
Townsville ..	162.4	-1.0	268.7	1.7	106.9	1.7
Bundaberg ..	163.8	-0.7	275.7	1.6	98.4	0.7
Warwick ..	183.0	-0.7	275.3	1.7	101.2	0.6

^a Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Food and Groceries.

During the December quarter of 1952, the food and groceries index numbers decreased for the six cities from which data are collected. These decreases varied from 0.7 per cent. in Bundaberg and Warwick to 1.9 per cent. in Brisbane. The principal variations recorded for Brisbane were decreases in the prices of potatoes, meat, milk, bacon, and onions, and increased prices for sugar, bread, and flour.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Bundaberg and Warwick, but increased in the other four cities by amounts ranging from 0.4 per cent. in Brisbane to 4.9 per cent. in Townsville.

Clothing and Footwear.

The clothing and footwear index numbers increased in the six cities covered by the survey by amounts ranging from 1.3 per cent. in Brisbane to 2.2 per cent. in Toowoomba. The increase in Brisbane was due chiefly to higher prices for women's and girls' frocks, and footwear.

Miscellaneous Items.

The increase of 0.7 per cent. in the miscellaneous items index for Brisbane was the lowest quarterly increase since the December quarter of 1949 when an increase of 0.5 per cent. was recorded. In Brisbane the chief cause of the recent increase in this index was a higher rate of gas charges, and in Rockhampton and Townsville, where the indexes rose by 1.8 and 1.7 per cent. respectively, there were also rises in electricity charges.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in December quarter, 1952, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	19	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
Rockhampton ..	1	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	11 $\frac{1}{4}$		1	0	3	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Townsville ..	1	1	0	1	1	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	9
Bundaberg ..		19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	15	4 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	5	1	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Warwick ..	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	16	7 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	3

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased during the quarter in the five provincial cities for which the index number is calculated. These increases in the amounts required in the various cities to purchase goods costing £1 in Brisbane were Toowoomba 1d., Bundaberg and Warwick 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., Rockhampton 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and Townsville 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

The amounts required to purchase food and groceries costing £1 in Brisbane increased in the other cities shown above by the following amounts:- Toowoomba $\frac{3}{4}$ d., Rockhampton 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., Townsville 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and Bundaberg and Warwick 3d. each.

The cost of purchasing clothing items costing £1 in Brisbane increased in the five provincial cities by amounts ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in Bundaberg to 2d. in Toowoomba.

In Toowoomba, Bundaberg, and Warwick, the prices of miscellaneous items retained almost the same relativity to Brisbane prices as in the September quarter, but increased in Rockhampton and Townsville. These increases were due chiefly to the fact that, while gas charges increased in Brisbane, both gas and electricity charges increased in Rockhampton and Townsville.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the December quarter, 1952, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st February, 1953. The index numbers, the new wage rates, and the amounts of the adjustments are shown in the next table. The latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated, are also shown. Rates prescribed by State Courts in Brisbane and Perth remained unchanged from those operating in the previous quarter. Commonwealth rates operated from the beginning of the first full pay period in February.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 4th Quarter, 1952.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.		
		Males. ^a	Increase ^b on Previous Rate.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.
		£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane	2,089	10 15 0	-1 0	10 16 0	7 4 6	3.11.52
Sydney	2,312	11 18 0	1 0	11 18 0	8 18 6	1.2.53
Melbourne	2,224	11 9 0	1 0	(11 9 0)	a	1.2.53 ^c
Adelaide	2,188	11 5 0	-4 0	11 5 0	8 8 6	1.2.53
Perth	2,225	11 9 0	1 0	11 18 6	7 15 0	27.10.52
Hobart	2,248	11 12 0	2 0	(11 12 0)	a	1.2.53 ^c

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b Minus (-) indicates decrease.

^c No State wage declared. The rate shown is that of the Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

10th February, 1953.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Dec., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Dec., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.
Brisbane	863	1,079	2,063	1,934	2,006	2,064	2,094	2,089
Toowoomba	851	1,092	2,083	1,944	2,022	2,093	2,107	2,110
Rockhampton ..	861	1,084	2,091	1,950	2,033	2,090	2,112	2,128
Townsville	912	1,119	2,148	2,006	2,082	2,142	2,175	2,194
Bundaberg	841	1,059	2,056	1,911	2,008	2,052	2,078	2,086
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	1,082	2,072	1,940	2,014	2,072	2,101	2,100
Warwick	822	1,073	2,063	1,918	1,994	2,061	2,094	2,102

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Dec., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Dec., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.
Brisbane	856	971	2,328	2,145	2,290	2,334	2,367	2,321
Toowoomba	814	1,010	2,382	2,169	2,332	2,434	2,401	2,361
Rockhampton ..	895	1,012	2,395	2,194	2,373	2,416	2,409	2,383
Townsville	955	1,057	2,485	2,281	2,429	2,472	2,531	2,506
Bundaberg	903	1,027	2,390	2,142	2,377	2,403	2,398	2,382
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	984	2,349	2,159	2,311	2,357	2,384	2,342
Warwick	846	1,000	2,376	2,165	2,311	2,385	2,412	2,394

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Dec., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Dec., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.
Brisbane	829	1,454	3,016	2,864	2,923	3,002	3,049	3,088
Toowoomba	829	1,429	2,992	2,819	2,896	2,965	3,020	3,086
Rockhampton ..	845	1,477	3,047	2,898	2,961	3,027	3,070	3,128
Townsville	840	1,457	3,027	2,878	2,938	3,029	3,045	3,097
Bundaberg	839	1,447	3,062	2,925	2,965	3,027	3,102	3,152
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	1,454	3,018	2,866	2,926	3,004	3,050	3,093
Warwick	825	1,441	3,017	2,858	2,913	3,014	3,044	3,096